THE HUMAN CHRIST

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THE HUMAN CHRIST

I CARRY a beautiful picture enshrined in my mind. It is the image of the perfect man. Strength, justice, courage, truth, grace, faithfulness are in every line of the face. Kindness, sympathy, hope, gladness, enthusiasm, constant good-will shine out of the eyes.

Unknown cost of effort, peril, pain, sorrow, and sympa-

thy has gone into this face. But it is not worn or sad. The look of victory is there — of good overcoming evil. There is firm rebuke in the face of the picture, at meanness, oppression, cruelty, selfishness, and pride. But infinite humanity also is there, as of one who believes in me to the last, expects the best of me, is determined to win me to his radiant faith in the right. The face is not too serious; it casts on me

many a smile of genial good humor. There is no companionship in the world quite equal to it. In its presence I am refreshed, strengthened, and heartened for every enterprise.

No one has ever seen in bodily form the ideal face of my picture. It belongs to no single nation, or color, or race, or religion. It is not man alone; it has womanly tenderness along with its strength.

It is as pure of evil thought as it is fearless of danger. It is a universal man, the son and heir of the universe. It is the image of God; it is doubtless my best self—the man I would chose to become.

The man in the shrine of my heart is like a wonderful composite photograph. All illustrious human persons and values have gone into making it. Whatever faults and foibles good men have ever had

fall away. All the good are in my picture, but it is greater than any one of them all. The prophet of Nazareth, who blessed little children, is with me, and many a dim figure of great prophets before him. The Buddha is with me, with his vast pity for suffering humanity. Socrates, drinking the hemlock and scorning to save his life by running away from his duty, has entered into the soul of my picture. The

brave English King Alfred is there, and many a true-hearted statesman and patriot; our own Washington at Valley Forge, and Abraham Lincoln writing the Proclamation of Emancipation, or visiting his wounded soldiers in the hospitals. The men and women who have made and moulded the lives of each of us, are in the picture, loving fathers and mothers, high-minded teachers, honest merchants, faith-

ful workmen, good physicians. Even the heroes of story are with us—the noble bishop in Les Miserables, Romola, and Adam Bede. Contributions fresh from human life go daily into making my picture. It is never complete, because it is infinite, like the life of God. Yet nothing that I possess is so real.

I too help in making the picture. Every good thought, every kind act or word, every

utterance of good-will develops and deepens the picture. To know the real man in my heart, to love him, to keep company with him, most of all, to do his bidding and not to dare or wish to move against his will—this is to be at one with myself; this is to love all true men everywhere; this is the essence of worship and communion with God. This is the heart of the Christmas joy.